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Two soldiers stationed in Büdingen, 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Regiment, were presented with the highest honor in the state of Hessen, the Hessentag Award, for rendering lifesaving aid to three German nationals.

The presentation took place in June near Fulda at the Hessen State Fair.

Spc. Anthony Perkins and Spc. Antoine Josseland, both combat medics, were driving back from Rhein Main Air Base last June when a car traveling at an excessive speed left the road.

"We were in the slow lane driving and approaching a curve when a car in front of us fish-tailed and hit the guardrail," Perkins explained. "The [impact] sent the car across our lane and over another guardrail and the car just disappeared," he said.

The car was out of sight because it slipped down an embankment that Perkins and Josseland said was approximately 16 feet below the autobahn. "We stopped the car, pulled over, got whatever first aid materials we had and ran down to the crash site," Perkins reflected.

"Truckers were the first on the scene. They were just pointing to us, 'Down there, down there,' telling us that the car was down in this swampy sewage ditch," Josseland said.

What the combat medics found at the resting place of the automobile was an alarming site. "We saw one casualty had been ejected from the vehicle. He had multiple fractures. You've seen a scarecrow. If you set him

down, his legs go whatever which way. That is what this guy looked like," Perkins explained.

"He had fractured legs, fractured ribs," Josseland said. "Another guy was [physically] fine, he had been wearing his seat belt," he said.

Although one of the passengers was able to escape the car, he became more of a hindrance than help. "He tried assisting us, but he was in shock. We had to calm him down," Perkins said.

As the scene unfolded into greater chaos, Perkins and Josseland noticed the driver was pinned in the car. "The driver was drowning," Perkins said, "He was upside down, still in his seatbelt, with his head in this swampy, muddy water."

Without hesitation, the two rescuers waded into the elbow-deep muddy water and worked to free the driver. "We got his head out of the water. In the meantime, we had trouble getting the door open, so I ran up to try to get a crowbar from one of the truckers who had stopped along the side the autobahn," Perkins said.

As Josseland held the driver's head out of the marshy water, Perkins learned that the truckers had nothing that could assist them in prying the driver's door open. "You would think a trucker would have a crowbar," Perkins said with exasperation.

"It was a four-door, so Josseland somehow broke the seat and we pulled the driver out of the rear door," Perkins said.

Once their patients were all accounted for, the challenge was to stabilize them, using only the contents of a standard first aid kit and their Army skills. Perkins and Josseland began performing their

ABCs. "Airway, Breathing, and Circulation, those are standard combat lifesaving skills," Perkins said.

Once the driver was freed from the wreckage, he was able to breathe on his own, but the passenger that neglected to buckle up presented another challenge.

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Ingrid Roux, chief of Host Nations,  
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Minister President of Hessen, Roland Koch, presents the Hessentag Award to Spc. Anthony Perkins and Spc. Antoine Josseland during the Hessen State Fair in June.

# Soldiers risk all, save two lives

"We had to improvise to stabilize the guy that had been thrown from the car," said Josseland. "I held his head and opened his airway so he could breathe and kept him still until the [emergency medical technicians] arrived," he said.

Perkins and Josseland estimated the EMTs arrived 15 minutes after the accident occurred. "They told us we had done a good job," Josseland said. "And then they took off with the patients," Perkins said.

After such an event, the two say they would not change a thing. "I am glad I had the medical training. If I didn't, I wouldn't have known what to do," Josseland said.

The two told the *Herald Union* they had tried to follow up on the accident in an attempt to learn the condition of the victims. "We went to the police station in Langenselbold, but it was like we hit a brick wall. They just said, 'We don't know,'" Perkins said.

Even though they do not know how the patients fared, the soldiers know their lifesaving acts were recognized.

"For a U.S. soldier, this is the highest award he can receive from the state of Hessen," said Ingrid Roux, chief of Host Nations, V Corps Headquarters in Heidelberg. "This award is for the German military, border police and all allied forces. The award ceremony was the featured attraction of the fair," Roux said.

"Memos go out at the beginning of the year inviting U.S. military commanders to nominate soldiers that have gone above and beyond the call of duty and have in some way helped further German-American relations and does not have to be a lifesaving effort," Roux said.

One year after the accident, Perkins and Josseland were given their Hessentag awards, because of a glowing nomination submitted by their commander, Capt. Steve Rosson, Headquarters Headquarters Troop, 1-1 Cav.

The dignitaries in attendance at the ceremony honoring the Hessentag awardees included the Maj. Gen. Charles C. Campbell, U.S. Consulate General; Maj. Gen. Buergener, the commanding general of the 5<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division (WBK4); and Roland Koch, Minister President for the state of Hessen.

